

Message Text

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S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 082018

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, XA, TZ, RH

SUBJECT:BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY'S VISIT TO TANZANIA

DAR ES SALAAM FOR THE AMBASSADOR

REF: (A) DAR ES SALAAM 1485, (B) LONDON 5880, (C) DAR ES
SALAAM 1498

1. MUGABE, NKOMO AND NYERERE HAVE ALL FOCUSED ON CRITICAL,
AND PERHAPS WEAKEST, POINT OF OWEN APPROACH, I.E., HOW A
NEW CONSTITUTION IS TO BE BROUGHT INTO EFFECT. BUT WHILE
THERE IS LITTLE THAT THE US CAN DO BY ITSELF TO HELP IMPL-
MENT A CONSTITUTION, WE BELIEVE THAT A CONSTITUTIONAL

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CONFERENCE THAT ENCOMPASSED PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES,
INCLUDING ALL NATIONALIST GROUPS AND PRODUCED AN AGREED
FORMULA FOR GOVERNING AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE, COULD IN AND
OF ITSELF PROVIDE A SITUATION WHEREIN IMPLEMENTATION WOULD
NOT NECESSARILY BE AN INSUPERABLE PROBLEM.

2. OWEN HIMSELF HAS SAID TO NKOMO THAT HE COULD NOT

GUARANTEE A CONSTITUTION WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED (REFTEL B). WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED. HOWEVER, WE AGREE THAT YOU SHOULD, WHILE NOT PLAYING DOWN THOSE DIFFICULTIES, DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH MUGABE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

(A) THE AGREEMENT TO A CONSTITUTION WOULD EMBODY A UNITY OF PURPOSE, THE LACK OF WHICH NOT ONLY HAS WEAKENED THE NATIONALISTS BUT ALSO HAS ADDED TO WHITE RELUCTANCE TO DEAL WITH THEM.

(B) ADDED TO THE PROMISE REPRESENTED BY AGREEMENT, WOULD BE THE STABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS THAT A CONSTITUTION COULD OFFER. THESE FACTORS WOULD MAKE THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT LESS CENTRAL TO THE PROBLEM OF A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT. WITH AGREEMENT ON A CONSTITUTION, THE QUESTION OF WHERE POWER RESIDED IN AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE RELATIVELY LESS IMPORTANT. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE IG'S TASKS (I.E., HOLD ELECTIONS--UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION IF NECESSARY--AND PROVIDE FOR A TRANSITION TO A NEW GOVERNMENT) WOULD BE INSUBSTANTIAL. NEVERTHELESS, THESE TASKS WOULD BE MUCH MORE EASILY MANAGEABLE THAN IF THE IG HELD THE KEY TO POST-INDEPENDENCE POWER.

(C) OBVIOUSLY, OUR HOPE IS THAT A CONSTITUTION THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL OF THE PARTIES CAN BE WORKED OUT. NEVERTHELESS, SHOULD THAT NOT BE POSSIBLE, A CONSTITUTION THAT HAS THE BACKING OF NATIONALISTS, FRONT LINE GOVERNMENTS, UK AND US, WOULD GAIN A SIGNIFICANT MEASURE OF INTER-
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NATIONAL SUPPORT. SUCH SUPPORT COULD BE CRITICAL FACTOR IN CONVINCING VORSTER AND WHITE RHODESIANS THAT A CONSTITUTION FOLLOWED BY FREE ELECTIONS WOULD BE THE BEST WAY OPEN TO THEM TO AVOID THE CARNAGE AND DESTRUCTION OF INTENSIFIED WARFARE.

3. DEPARTMENT CONCURS WITH YOUR SUGGESTED APPROACH TO MUGABE RE
US ROLE (PARA 3 REFTTEL C). IN ADDITION, YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE TO MUGABE THAT NO ASPECT OF OWEN'S APPROACH IS CAST IN CONCRETE, THAT HE IS EXPLORING REPEAT EXPLORING IDEAS, SUPPORTED BY US, WITH THE PARTIES IN EFFORT TO FIND WAY OUT OF PRESENT IMPASSE AND AVOID TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF INTENSIFIED WAR. IN LIGHT OF OWEN'S MEETINGS IN AFRICA, WE EXPECT TO CONSULT FURTHER WITH UK WHEN THESE IDEAS, INCLUDING US INVOLVEMENT, WILL BE FURTHER DISCUSSED.
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